

December 1999

# DRUG CONTROL

## Assets DOD Contributes to Reducing the Illegal Drug Supply Have Declined



G A O

Accountability \* Integrity \* Reliability



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**Abbreviations**

DOD      Department of Defense



United States General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

National Security and  
International Affairs Division

B-283733

December 21, 1999

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Chairman, Caucus on International Narcotics Control  
United States Senate

The Honorable John L. Mica  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice,  
Drug Policy and Human Resources  
Committee on Government Reform  
House of Representatives

Illegal drugs, primarily cocaine and, increasingly, heroin from South America, continue to threaten the health and well-being of American citizens. The U.S. national counterdrug effort is directed by the five goals of the National Drug Control Strategy published by the Office of National Drug Control Policy. In 1998, approximately \$16.1 billion was spent to support the strategy. The Department of Defense (DOD) plays an important role in U.S. efforts to interdict drugs in transit to the United States and to stop drugs at their source—two major goals of the National Drug Control Strategy. In 1998, DOD spent about \$635 million to support these supply reduction efforts.<sup>1</sup>

DOD is the lead federal agency for detecting and monitoring maritime and aerial shipments of illegal drugs and provides assistance and training to foreign governments to combat drug-trafficking activities. DOD's counterdrug activities are integrated with the international activities of other U.S. agencies such as the Customs Service, the Coast Guard, and the Drug Enforcement Administration and with foreign governments. These agencies and governments are largely responsible for the "end game"—the arrest of traffickers and the seizure of illicit drugs. Despite U.S. efforts to stem the flow of illicit drugs into the United States, the Office of National Drug Control Policy reported in 1999 that cocaine usage and price have been relatively stable throughout the 1990s.

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<sup>1</sup>National Drug Control Strategy, Budget Summary, Office of National Drug Control Policy (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 1999). The amount excludes the value of excess defense articles, international military education and training, and foreign military sales programs DOD provides to foreign governments for counterdrug purposes.

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You expressed concerns as to how DOD carries out its counterdrug mission. As requested, we examined (1) DOD's plan for supporting U.S. counterdrug efforts and how DOD measures its effectiveness, (2) changes in the level of DOD support for counterdrug activities from fiscal year 1992 through fiscal year 1999<sup>2</sup> and the reasons for the changes, and (3) obstacles DOD faces in providing counterdrug assistance to foreign governments.

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## Results in Brief

The Department of Defense has plans and strategies that support the goal of reducing the nation's illegal drug supply as specified in the National Drug Control Strategy. DOD supports this goal by providing military personnel, detection and monitoring equipment, intelligence support, communication systems, and training. However, DOD has not yet developed a set of performance measures to assess its effectiveness in contributing to this goal but has taken some initial steps to develop such measures. These steps include the development of a database to capture information that can be used to assess the relative performance of DOD's detection and monitoring assets.

DOD's level of support to international drug control efforts has declined significantly since 1992. For example, the number of flight hours dedicated to detecting and monitoring illicit drug shipments declined from approximately 46,000 to 15,000, or 68 percent, from 1992 through 1999. Likewise, the number of ship days declined from about 4,800 to 1,800, or 62 percent, over the same period. Some of the decline in air and maritime support has been partially offset by increased support provided by the U.S. Coast Guard and Customs Service. Nevertheless, DOD officials have stated that coverage in key, high-threat drug-trafficking areas in the Caribbean and in cocaine-producing countries is limited. The decline in assets DOD uses to carry out its counterdrug responsibilities is due to (1) the lower priority assigned to the counterdrug mission compared with that assigned to other military missions that might involve contact with hostile forces such as peacekeeping and (2) overall reductions in defense budgets and force levels. DOD officials believe that their operations are more efficient today than in the past and that this has partially offset the decline in assets available for counterdrug operations. Because of a lack of data, however, the impact of the reduced level of DOD support on drug trafficking is unknown.

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<sup>2</sup>This period was selected because data on DOD's support for counterdrug activities was not available before 1992.

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DOD faces several challenges in providing counterdrug support to host-nation military and law enforcement organizations. These organizations often lack the capability to operate and repair equipment and effectively utilize training provided by the United States. In addition, DOD faces restrictions on providing training support to some foreign military units and sharing intelligence information with certain host-nation counterdrug organizations because of past evidence of human rights violations and corruption within these organizations.

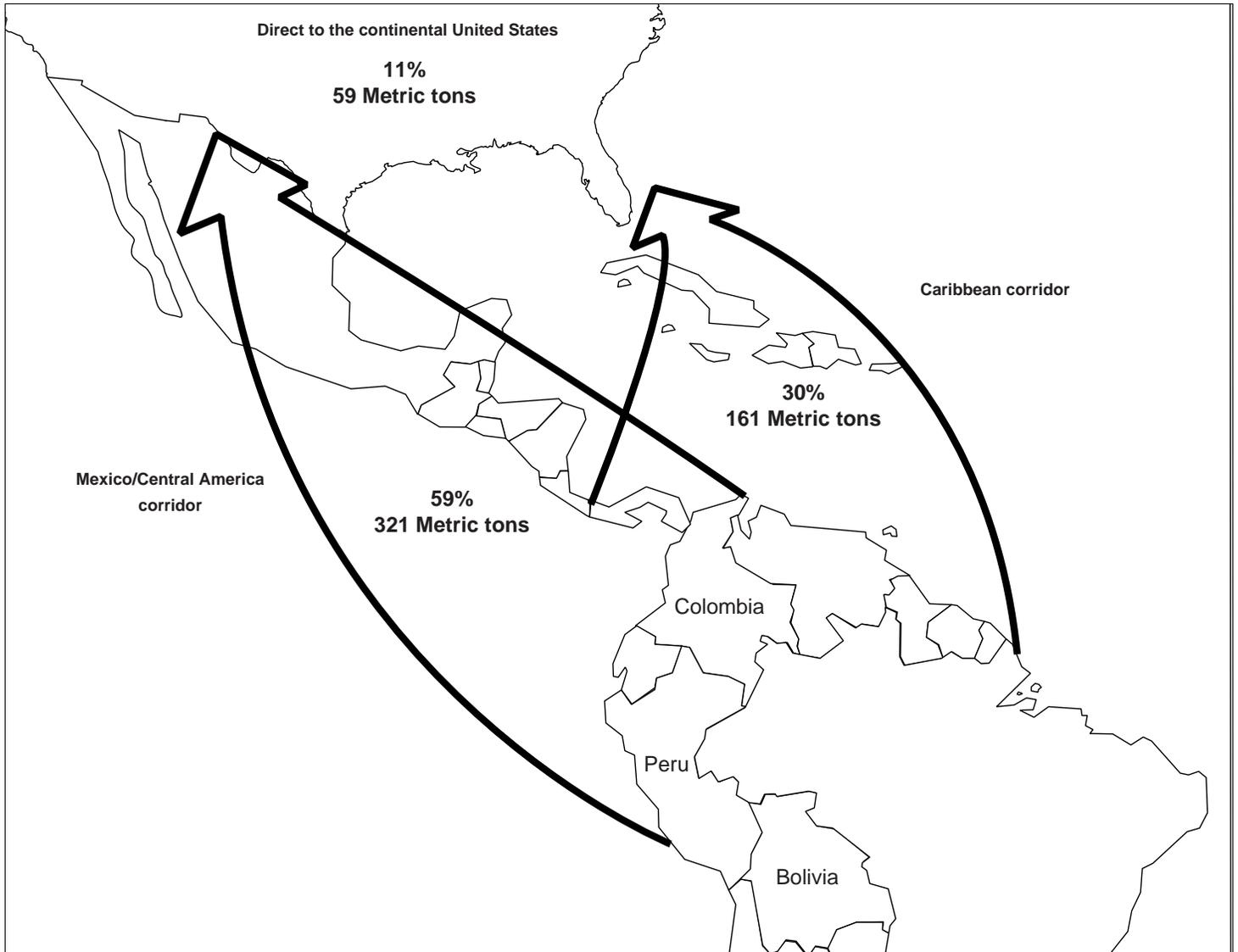
We are recommending that DOD develop measures to assess the effectiveness of its counterdrug activities.

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## Background

According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, almost 14 million Americans use illegal drugs regularly, and drug-related illness, death, and crime cost the nation approximately \$110 billion annually. Between 1990 and 1997, there were more than 100,000 drug-induced deaths in the United States. The United States consumes over 300 metric tons of cocaine per year. Coca is grown for market distribution almost exclusively in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru (see fig. 1). Also, over the last 4 years, Colombia has supplied an increasing percentage of the heroin used in the United States.

Figure 1: Estimated 1998 Cocaine Flow to the United States



Note: Percentage figures refer to total cocaine shipped through Central America, the Caribbean, or directly to the United States from Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru.

Source: Office of National Drug Control Policy.

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In response to the threat, in 1995 the Office of National Drug Control Policy prepared a national drug control strategy that established goals to reduce drug demand and supply.<sup>3</sup> The strategy includes two supply reduction goals to reduce the flow of drugs entering the United States by 20 percent by 2002. The two goals are to shield America's air, land, and sea frontiers from the drug threat and to break foreign and domestic drug sources of supply.

DOD initially became involved in counterdrug operations in the early 1980s and in 1988 was formally tasked by Congress to take the lead in detecting and monitoring illegal drug shipments and assisting domestic and foreign law enforcement agencies in interdicting them.<sup>4</sup> From fiscal year 1989 through 1999, DOD spent over \$10 billion for counterdrug activities. DOD primarily provides support by using equipment such as ships, patrol boats, aircraft, and radar to detect drug shipments in the transshipment areas from South America to the United States.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Office of National Drug Control Policy was created in 1989 to establish a coherent national policy and to unify the more than 30 federal agencies and innumerable state and local authorities involved in counterdrug activities.

<sup>4</sup> National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1989 (P.L.100-456 [Sept. 29,1988]).

<sup>5</sup>In 1981 Congress enacted legislation authorizing DOD to provide certain types of assistance to civilian law enforcement agencies, and in 1990 Congress enacted legislation specifically intended for DOD support of drug interdiction and other law enforcement activities. (See 10 U.S.C. 371-382 and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991, respectively.) The 1981 legislation states that DOD shall prescribe regulations as may be necessary to ensure that any activity performed under this legislation shall not include or permit direct participation by a DOD member in a search, seizure, arrest, or similar activity, unless participation in such activity is otherwise authorized by law (10 U.S.C. 375). Also, DOD personnel are prohibited, with certain exceptions, from directly effecting an arrest in any foreign country as part of any foreign police action with respect to narcotic control efforts (22 U.S.C. 2291 (c)).

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The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict has been designated as the DOD Coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support. The Coordinator is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for drug enforcement policy, requirements, priorities, systems, resources, and programs and serves as DOD's liaison to the Office of National Drug Control Policy. DOD works closely with the other U.S. agencies involved in interdiction activities, such as the Customs Service, the Coast Guard, and the Drug Enforcement Administration.<sup>6</sup> U.S. embassies are responsible for working with other federal agencies to formulate a comprehensive strategy for U.S. counterdrug activities within host nations that is consistent with the U.S. national drug strategy.

DOD's Southern Command, one of DOD's five combatant commands, has the lead role in counterdrug detection and monitoring in the area that includes Central and South America and the Caribbean. DOD's Atlantic and Pacific Commands also support DOD counterdrug activities in their respective regions. Two counterdrug joint interagency task forces, East and West, come under the authority of the Southern and Pacific Commands, respectively. These task forces, comprised of personnel from the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, the Customs Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, have primary responsibility for implementing international counterdrug detection and monitoring activities. Joint Interagency Task Force East takes the lead role in the coordination of efforts against the northward flow of drugs from South America, and Joint Interagency Task Force West takes the lead in the flow of drugs from Asia.

DOD provides support to domestic and foreign counterdrug organizations in the form of detection and monitoring, intelligence, and communication assets. DOD provides these assets from its existing inventory rather than purchasing new equipment. DOD also provides counterdrug support to host nations by supplying support services and training and allowing use of its facilities. In 1997, DOD provided Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia with assistance totaling about \$44 million, \$28 million, and \$4 million, respectively.

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<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Customs Service and Coast Guard also conduct detection and monitoring activities.

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## DOD's Counterdrug Strategies Are Linked to the National Strategy, but DOD Lacks Measures of Effectiveness

A framework of strategies and plans linked to the National Drug Control Strategy guides DOD's counterdrug activities. DOD has not yet developed a set of performance measures to assess the impact of its counterdrug operations but has taken some steps to improve its ability to measure its performance. Without such measures, DOD cannot clearly assess the effectiveness of its strategy, operations, and limited counterdrug assets.

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## A Framework of Counterdrug Strategies and Plans Guides DOD's Efforts

National, headquarters, and command-level strategies and plans, all of which are linked to the National Drug Control Strategy, provide guidance for DOD's counterdrug activities (see app. I for a complete description of these strategies and plans). These strategies and plans, drafted by various organizations within the national security system and proceeding from the President's office down to field commanders, guide DOD's counterdrug operations. Each strategy or plan is crafted for a specific purpose and supports the higher-level strategies above it. The national security, military, and drug control strategies describe the broad policy goals and objectives the nation wants to achieve in combating illegal drugs. In addition, they place counterdrug activities within the context of the nation's overall national security concerns and provide a rationale for DOD's involvement.

DOD's Office for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support has developed a 5-year counterdrug plan based on the goals of the National Drug Control Strategy. The plan broadly describes the military personnel, detection and monitoring assets, intelligence support, communication systems, and training DOD will provide to domestic law enforcement agencies and foreign counterdrug military and police forces to implement the National Drug Control Strategy's supply reduction goals. Regional commanders in the field develop more detailed strategies and plans. For example, the U.S. Southern Command's latest counterdrug campaign plan, completed in August 1999, describes the illicit drug threat, the command's counterdrug mission, objectives intended to counter the threat, and some of the key resources available to achieve the plan's objectives. In addition, the plan reflects changes that have occurred in the illicit drug threat, the level of available assets, and the command's location and geographic area of responsibility since 1992 when the command's prior plan was issued. According to a Southern Command official, a new plan was needed to provide a framework for conducting operations over the long term, to

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better focus limited assets, to define future requirements, and to improve interagency coordination.

The campaign plan is based on the assumption that the assets required to achieve Southern Command's counterdrug objectives will be available. However, DOD officials noted that the level of counterdrug assets will continue to be constrained by DOD's requirement to satisfy other higher priority missions; consequently, the assets may not be available.

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## DOD Has Not Developed Performance Measures

DOD has not developed a set of performance measures to evaluate its counterdrug activities as part of its counterdrug strategies; however, it has taken steps that may help it develop performance measures. Such measures could help DOD determine the effectiveness of its counterdrug operations and make better use of limited intelligence, detection, and monitoring assets. The 1993 Government Performance and Results Act incorporates performance measurement as one of its most important features.<sup>7</sup> Under the act, executive branch agencies are required to develop annual performance plans that use performance measurement to reinforce the connection between the long-term strategic goals outlined in their strategic plans and their day-to-day activities. DOD designated the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review as its overall strategic planning document for the purpose of satisfying the requirements of the Results Act. The Quadrennial Review identifies DOD's support role in reducing the production and flow of illegal drugs to the United States as a subset of the overall DOD strategy of "shaping the international environment."

According to DOD, although the Department has not developed its own performance measures, it supports the goals and measures of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. However, we found that the Office of National Drug Control Policy's measures are intended to determine progress in achieving national counterdrug-related goals, not to measure the performance of the individual federal agencies that implement U.S. counterdrug activities. None of the Office of National Drug Control Policy's measures relates directly to DOD's current detection and monitoring efforts.

According to DOD officials, DOD is working with the joint interagency task forces to help them develop performance measures and that it will use its

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<sup>7</sup>P. L. 103-62 (Aug. 3, 1993).

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Consolidated Counterdrug Data Base to help judge the performance of its detection and monitoring assets. DOD officials believe these initial steps will enable them to begin the process of establishing departmentwide counterdrug performance measures.

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## DOD's Support to Counterdrug Efforts Has Declined

DOD's support of U.S. intelligence, detection, and monitoring of illegal drug shipments declined from fiscal years 1992 through 1999. Specifically, the number of flight hours and ship days DOD dedicated to detecting and monitoring drug trafficking in primary drug-trafficking routes to the United States dropped. In addition, interdiction support in cocaine source countries has also declined in recent years. Consequently, coverage of key drug-trafficking routes to the United States is limited. DOD attributes the decline to the low priority assigned to the counterdrug mission compared with that assigned to other missions, as well as to decreases in its overall budget. Although they had not developed any supporting data, DOD officials believe their operations are more efficient today than in the past and that this has partially offset the decline in assets available for counterdrug operations. The officials cited a better understanding of the drug threat, the addition of Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar systems that provide increased wide-area surveillance of airborne targets, and enhanced cooperation with U.S. and host-nation organizations as factors contributing to more efficient operations.

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## Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Flights Have Declined

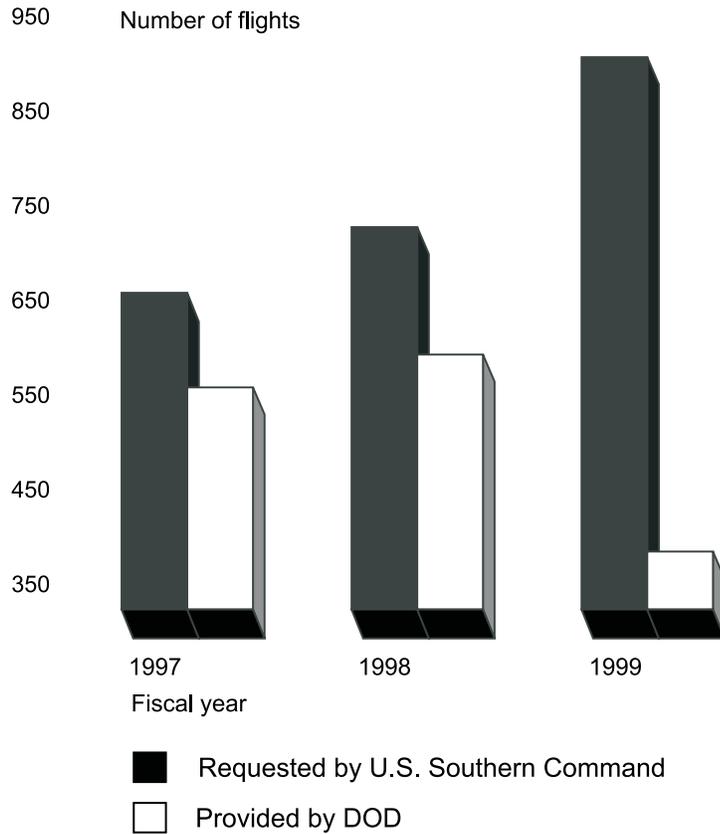
Effective intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations are critical to the U.S. international counterdrug efforts. DOD uses intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft to provide timely and focused intelligence information to forces involved in detection, monitoring, and interdiction. The assets collect signals, imagery, and measurement and signature intelligence.<sup>8</sup> DOD officials told us that without a robust intelligence collection capability, the U.S.' ability to locate and identify drug production facilities, airfields, and trafficking patterns is greatly reduced. As shown in figure 2, the number of intelligence collection flights

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<sup>8</sup>Signals intelligence comprises all communications, electronic, and foreign government instrumentation intelligence, however transmitted. Imagery intelligence involves the production of images from visual photography, lasers, electro-optics, and infrared and radar sensors. Measurement and signature intelligence is the scientific and technical information obtained by quantitative and qualitative analysis of data derived from sensors for the purpose of identifying a target's features.

decreased by over 30 percent from fiscal years 1997 through 1999 in Central and South America and the Caribbean, while Southern Command's requirements increased. DOD could only meet 43 percent of U.S. Southern Command's requests for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance flights in fiscal year 1999.

**Figure 2: DOD's Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Counterdrug Aircraft Support in Central and South America and the Caribbean, Fiscal Years 1997-99**



Note: Data prior to 1997 was not available.

Source: U.S. Southern Command.

According to the Southern Command Commander, “significant deficiencies in the availability of required assets” impede the command’s ability to react quickly and effectively to changes in drug traffickers’ patterns throughout

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the region. For example, U.S. embassy officials in Peru told us that shortages of intelligence assets are a problem there. The United States uses reconnaissance assets to collect information that helps analysts understand the drug-trafficking threat and traffickers' trends. According to embassy officials in Peru, reconnaissance assets have only been used once in Peru in recent years. Results from this reconnaissance activity were limited because of (1) the amount of time the assets were available, (2) the distraction of assisting ongoing humanitarian operations outside of Peru, and (3) a scheduled maintenance period that occurred during the time the assets were in Peru. Consequently, while the information provided by the reconnaissance assets was useful, it was of limited quantity. The embassy would like more frequent deployments of longer duration in the future.

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## DOD Detection and Monitoring Support Has Been Reduced

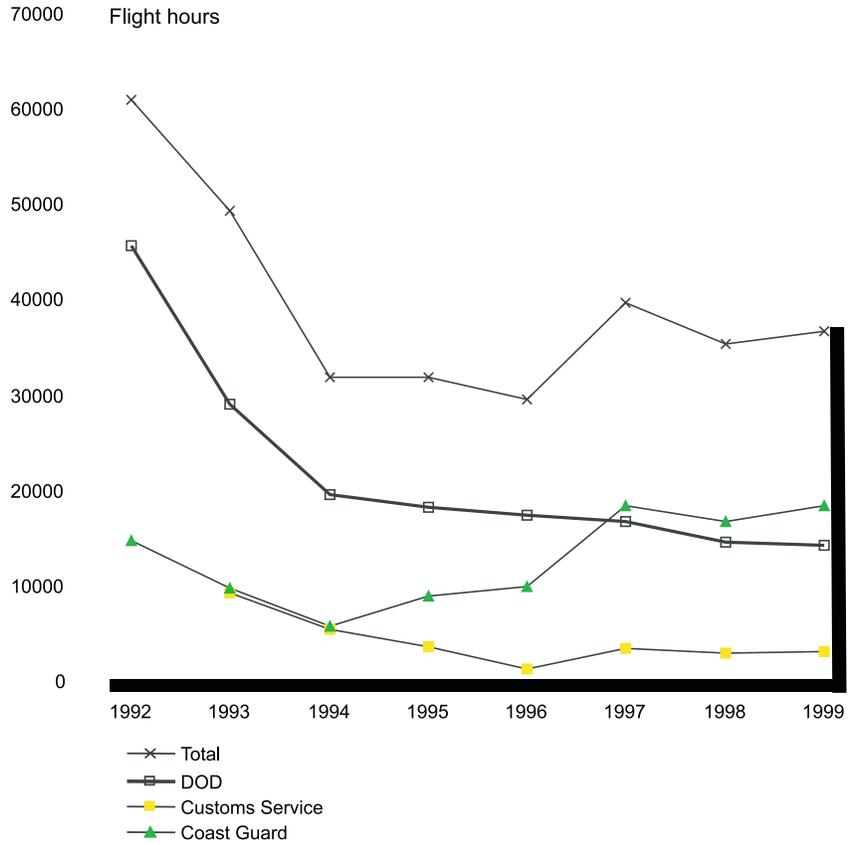
Early detection and continuous tracking of air and surface vessels suspected of drug trafficking are key aspects of U.S. interdiction efforts. Although DOD has a lead role in this task, its contribution in terms of flying hours and ship days has decreased since its peak in fiscal year 1992. As shown in figure 3, flying hours dedicated to tracking suspect shipments in transit to the United States declined from 46,264 to 14,770, or 68 percent, from fiscal years 1992 through 1999. Some of the reduction in aerial support can be attributed to the shift in drug trafficking from aerial to maritime methods.<sup>9</sup> In addition, as shown in figure 3, increases in the U.S. Customs Service and U.S. Coast Guard aircraft flight hours have offset some of the decline in DOD's flight hours during this period.<sup>10</sup> DOD officials stated that the Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar systems, introduced in 1994 and 1995, improved their ability to detect airborne drug trafficking by providing near 24-hour, wide-area surveillance. However, the radar systems lack the capability to provide data on the precise location of air targets and provide only limited surveillance of maritime drug traffic.

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<sup>9</sup> Beginning in fiscal year 1993 and continuing through fiscal year 1998, cocaine traffickers increased their reliance on maritime vessels rather than aircraft. During this period, air drug-trafficking events decreased by 42 percent, while maritime events increased by 55 percent.

<sup>10</sup> The increase, due in part to congressional funding decisions to enhance law enforcement interdiction capabilities, was not planned as a direct response to DOD reductions.

**Figure 3: DOD, U.S. Customs Service, and U.S. Coast Guard Flight Hours Allocated to Tracking Illegal Drug Shipments in Transshipment Areas, Fiscal Years 1992-99**



Note: U.S. Customs Service data prior to 1993 was not available.

Source: Joint Interagency Task Forces East and West, U.S. Customs Service, and U.S. Coast Guard.

As shown in table 1, reductions in flight hours occurred in most classes of aircraft. See appendix II for descriptions of DOD's counterdrug detection and monitoring assets.

**Table 1: Transshipment Area Flying Hours of Major DOD Aircraft Used for Counterdrug Missions, Fiscal Years 1992-99**

Aircraft	1992	1999	Percent change 1992-99
Navy P-3C	23,254	8,321	-64
Navy E-2 (AEW)	7,334	3,154	-57
Air Force F-15/16	574	638	+11
Air Force E-3	2,734	544	-80
Air Force KC-135	995	291	-71
Navy S-3	1,644	0	-100
Navy SH2F	2,876	640	-78
Navy SH60B	4,611	1182	-74

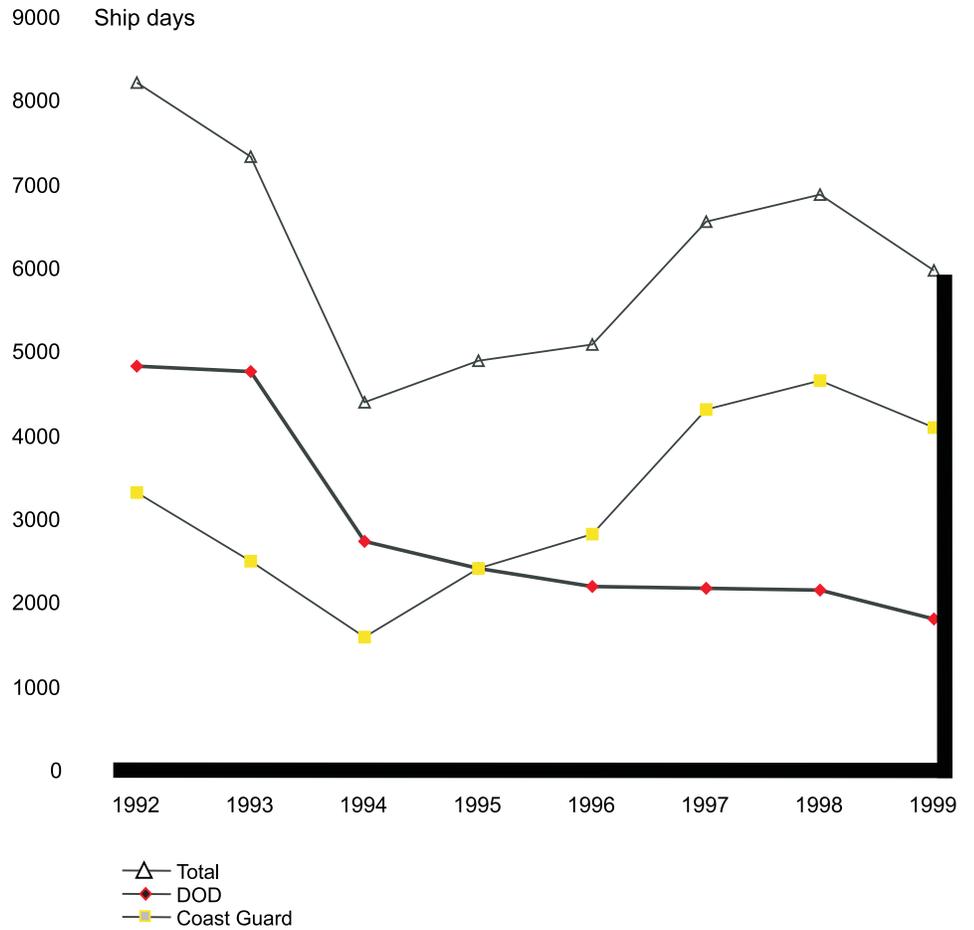
Legend: AEW=Airborne Early Warning

Note: Flight hours in the table do not reflect all DOD assets included in figure 3.

Source: Joint Interagency Task Forces East and West.

Despite the shift in trafficking methods from primarily airborne to maritime, the number of DOD ship days devoted to supporting interdiction of suspected maritime illegal drug shipments declined 62 percent from 1992 through 1999 (see fig. 4). Declines occurred in several key vessel types employed by DOD. For example, ship days for DOD cruisers declined from 558 in fiscal year 1992 to 183 in fiscal year 1999. These declines in maritime interdiction were partially offset by the increase in U.S. Coast Guard ship days during the same period.

Figure 4: DOD and U.S. Coast Guard Counterdrug Ship Days, Fiscal Years 1992-99



Note: "Ship Day" refers to each day a ship was working on counterdrug efforts.  
Source: Joint Interagency Task Forces East and West and U.S. Coast Guard.

### Limited Coverage in Key Drug-trafficking Areas

Although DOD's 5-year counterdrug plan states that DOD will ensure that sufficient assets are allocated to support domestic and foreign counterdrug agencies, DOD officials indicated that there are gaps in coverage of high-threat drug-trafficking routes in South America and transit routes to the United States. According to the Southern Command Commander, the command can only detect and monitor 15 percent of key routes in the overall drug-trafficking area about 15 percent of the time. This has been a continuing problem. Consequently, illegal drug shipments to the United

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States can go largely undetected. Further exacerbating DOD's declining support was the closure of Howard Air Force Base in Panama in May 1999. The base provided the logistical and tactical infrastructure for launching counterdrug flight missions to South and Central America and the Caribbean.

**Gaps in Monitoring Illegal Drug Production and Shipment in Source Countries**

Reductions have occurred in DOD's air coverage to support the interdiction of drugs in the source countries of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. Between fiscal years 1998 and 1999, detection and monitoring flight hours over these source countries declined from 2,092 to 1,090, or 48 percent.<sup>11</sup>

According to embassy officials, reduced aerial support to monitor and track cocaine shipments within the source countries has hurt U.S. efforts to sustain a previously successful interdiction program focused on transshipment routes between Peru and Colombia. In 1995, the Peruvian Air Force began a program to disrupt air shipments of cocaine base<sup>12</sup> from Peru to Colombia. The program, the Air Bridge Denial Program, used DOD and other U.S. intelligence and radar data to locate suspect aircraft, which were then intercepted and either shot down or grounded by the Peruvian Air Force. As air trafficking dropped, a surplus of cocaine base developed; consequently, cultivation dropped as coca base prices declined. According to a State Department report,<sup>13</sup> the interception of aircraft was a major factor in suppressing cocaine base prices to levels below farmers' production costs. The report further states that as a consequence, farmers abandoned coca fields because they found coca farming no longer profitable.

However, since late 1997, U.S. aerial support for the program has declined. U.S. officials in Peru told us that there has been little or no U.S. airborne intelligence or surveillance of air traffic routes between Peru and Colombia since 1997, even though recent changes in smuggling tactics and communications have made sophisticated airborne surveillance increasingly important. The U.S. Ambassador to Peru warned in an October 1998 letter to the State Department that the reduction in air support could

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<sup>11</sup>Data prior to fiscal year 1998 was not available.

<sup>12</sup>Cocaine base is partially refined cocaine. Final refinement of cocaine base occurs in Colombia.

<sup>13</sup> International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1997-98).

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have a serious impact on the price of coca. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, coca cultivation and price in Peru have risen over the past year.

With the runway closed at Howard Air Force Base in Panama on May 1, 1999, DOD said that its and other U.S. counterdrug agencies' aerial detection and monitoring coverage would be significantly reduced if not replicated by other means. Howard Air Force Base provided a position close to cocaine-producing countries for launching U.S. counterdrug aircraft. To offset the loss of Howard, DOD is establishing three "forward operating" locations for U.S. aerial detection and interdiction assets in Aruba/Curacao, Netherlands Antilles; Manta, Ecuador; and a third location in Central America. The forward operating locations were established through temporary agreements with the governments of Ecuador and the Netherlands. The United States signed a long-term agreement (10-year initial term) with Ecuador in November 1999 and is negotiating a long-term agreement with the Netherlands for continuous operations from these locations. The forward operating locations will provide a 24-hour, 7-day operational capability, including runways, ramp space, maintenance facilities, refueling and service capability, force protection, and support services for personnel and aircrews. DOD also has other forward operating sites throughout the Caribbean and in Central and South America that supplement the three forward operating locations by providing refueling, logistical services, and emergency landing rights (see fig. 5 for site locations).

Figure 5: DOD Forward Operating Locations and Sites



Source: DOD.

DOD conducts regular detection and monitoring flights over transit routes from Aruba/Curacao and Manta, but it is not currently conducting as many flights in source countries from these locations as it historically conducted from Howard Air Force Base. The main contributing factor is that Manta currently accommodates only one P-3 aircraft. Safety upgrades to Manta's facilities scheduled over the next 5 months will allow for multi-aircraft operations, to include U.S. Customs Service Airborne Early Warning and other aircraft. Additional upgrades to Manta during fiscal year 2001 will allow larger U.S. Air Force Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems aircraft to operate throughout cocaine-producing countries. DOD stated that once Congress appropriates the funds, it would take 2 years to fully upgrade Manta. DOD officials told us that a Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar system in Puerto Rico, scheduled to be operational by February 2000, would extend into the source region, allowing for more efficient use of limited airborne surveillance assets by providing information on specific targets and identifying drug-trafficking trends.<sup>14</sup> In addition, while agreements between the United States and Venezuela for overflight exist, since June 1999 the Venezuelan government has only allowed a very limited number of U.S. counterdrug aircraft to fly over its territory. DOD officials told us that unless overflights are allowed, its aerial surveillance support would be reduced for cocaine source countries.

## Gaps in the Transit Zone

DOD has been unable to sustain operational support in a key threat area in the Eastern Pacific. The Office of National Drug Control Policy estimated in 1998 that 33 percent of the illegal drugs shipped to the United States transits this area. In 1996, DOD supported a successful operation, called Caper Focus, but was unable to sustain the effort due to a lack of available assets. During the operation, Joint Interagency Task Force East temporarily shifted about 200 flight hours and two ships per month from the Caribbean to the Eastern Pacific. As a result of the temporary operation, 27 metric tons of cocaine were seized or jettisoned. Prior to the operation, few seizures had been made. However, according to DOD, it was unable to sustain the operation during 1997 and 1998 because of insufficient flight hours. In fiscal year 1999, Congress provided \$6 million in additional funds to DOD for renewed operational support to the Eastern

<sup>14</sup> DOD operates two Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar, located in Virginia and Texas, which provide wide-area coverage to detect suspect aircraft (mostly in the Caribbean). The radar sites do not provide coverage into key trafficking areas in cocaine producing countries. Appendix II provides additional information on DOD's counterdrug radar facilities.

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Pacific. The funds were used to gather intelligence to assess the threat and modes of transportation and to design operations to interdict illegal drug shipments. In June and August 1999, DOD and U.S. agencies helped host-nation authorities seize over 16 metric tons of cocaine.

**Better Understanding of Drug Threat and Cooperation Cited**

DOD officials stated that its reduced support to the counterdrug effort has hampered coverage in key drug-trafficking routes. However, they also believe that DOD's counterdrug efforts are more efficient today than in the past. The officials cited a better understanding of the drug threat by U.S. counterdrug organizations and improved coordination between U.S. and host nations' counterdrug organizations as factors that have contributed to increased efficiency. For example, host nations have cooperated with Joint Interagency Task Force East in planning and conducting regional counterdrug operations.

Joint Interagency Task Force East officials told us their work with host governments in Central America and the Caribbean resulted in several drug seizures in 1999. For example, Panama supported the United States in the seizure of 27 kilograms of cocaine off the Panamanian coast. In addition, Panamanian and Nicaraguan law enforcement officials eradicated 1.7 million marijuana plants in 1999. DOD did not provide any data to demonstrate the degree to which DOD detection and monitoring support had contributed to these improvements. See appendix I for the locations of the Joint Interagency Task Force East/DOD-supported operations.

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**Low Priority of the Counterdrug Mission Limits DOD Assets Available for Detection and Monitoring**

The lower priority assigned by DOD to the counterdrug mission in comparison to other missions reduces the availability of detection and monitoring assets for counterdrug operations. In 1989, the Secretary of Defense issued guidance stating that:

“the detection and countering of the production, trafficking and use of illegal drugs is a high priority national security mission...[and] the Department of Defense will work to advance substantially the national objective of reducing the flow of illegal drugs to the United States through the effective application of available resources....”

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DOD does not purchase major equipment such as aircraft and ships specifically for the counterdrug mission. Rather, it carries out counterdrug operations using assets that are purchased primarily for other missions. DOD categorizes some of the assets that it uses for counterdrug operations as low-density, high-demand assets.<sup>15</sup> DOD policy that sets priorities for the use of its low-density, high-demand assets states that the counterdrug mission is the fourth priority after war, other military operations that might involve contact with hostile forces such as peacekeeping, and training.

Due to the lower priority assigned to the counterdrug mission, DOD allocates assets to counterdrug detection and monitoring operations after it meets the requirements for higher-priority missions. DOD develops standing orders that specify the number and types of equipment it expects to be available for counterdrug operations on a continuous basis. However, commands that provide counterdrug assets can request “relief” from standing counterdrug orders when higher-priority missions arise. For example, although DOD usually commits two airborne warning and control systems aircraft to the counterdrug mission, one aircraft was reassigned in January 1999 to support the Iraqi no-fly zone (Operation Southern Watch) and then in April 1999 for the Kosovo crisis. The aircraft has not yet returned to the counterdrug mission. Further, although Southern Command’s new counterdrug campaign plan defines detection and monitoring resource requirements, according to a Southern Command official, the DOD resource requirements contained in the plan are constrained by the level of assets DOD has determined are available for the counterdrug effort after considering other requirements. Joint Chiefs of Staff officials told us that the level of assets DOD commits to counterdrug activities is unlikely to change because DOD’s inventory of assets for detection and monitoring is not growing, and the priority of the counterdrug mission in comparison to other missions is unlikely to change.

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<sup>15</sup>According to DOD policy, low-density, high-demand assets are “major platforms, weapons systems, units, and/or personnel that possess unique mission capabilities and are in continual high demand to support worldwide joint military operations.”

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## Funding and Equipment Levels Have Declined Since the Early 1990s

DOD's counterdrug budget has generally declined since 1993. At the same time, the inventory of important counterdrug assets has also declined. DOD experienced initial funding increases in the early 1990s. However, from fiscal years 1993 through 1999, DOD's counterdrug budget declined from \$1.3 billion to \$975 million, or 24 percent. The funds are used to support military training deployments, radar systems, aircraft, ships, and command and communications systems. DOD's overall budget declined by approximately 14 percent during this period, from \$300 billion in fiscal year 1993 to about \$260 billion in fiscal year 1999.<sup>16</sup>

DOD spends about 75 percent of its counterdrug funds on drug supply reduction goals to support the interdiction of drugs in cocaine source countries and in transit to the United States. The remaining 25 percent are spent on the domestic and demand reduction goals of the National Drug Control Strategy.<sup>17</sup> The funds support law enforcement interdiction efforts in the United States through the use of active duty military and reserve components for intelligence, transportation, and training. Funds are also used for education and awareness programs and drug testing.

In addition to decreases in the budget, DOD officials told us that the overall inventory of defense equipment that can be used for counterdrug purposes has declined as a result of the post-Cold War drawdown of U.S. forces. Between 1989 and 1999, DOD made force reductions that included an active military personnel reduction of about 35 percent and corresponding reductions in equipment levels. For example, DOD reduced the number of naval ships by 44 percent from 562 in fiscal year 1989 to 317 ships in fiscal year 1999. As shown in table 2, the inventory of some of DOD's important detection and monitoring assets also declined from fiscal years 1992 through 1999.

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<sup>16</sup> All figures are in 1999 constant dollars.

<sup>17</sup> Data on the budget for reducing the drug supply was only available from fiscal years 1996 through 1999.

**Table 2: Inventory of Major DOD Equipment Available for Counterdrug Missions, Fiscal Years 1992-99**

Asset type	1992	1999 <sup>a</sup>	Percent change 1992-99
Navy P-3C	255	244	-04
Navy E-2 AEW	115	71	-38
Air Force F-15/16	974	735	-25

Legend: AEW=Airborne Early Warning

<sup>a</sup>Data is through June 1999.

Source: DOD.

## Challenges to DOD's Support of Host-Nations' Counterdrug Efforts

DOD provides a variety of support, such as detection and monitoring, training, logistics, and equipment, to assist host nations' counterdrug efforts. In 1997, DOD spent over \$459 million on this type of assistance worldwide. In doing so, it faces several challenges, including (1) the limited capability of host nations to operate and repair equipment or to effectively utilize training provided by the United States, (2) host-nation difficulties in meeting U.S. eligibility conditions for providing training aid to military units, and (3) U.S. restrictions on sharing intelligence with some host-nation counterdrug organizations.

## Maintenance of Equipment and Utilization of Training

Although DOD has provided equipment and training to a number of host-nation counterdrug organizations, these organizations have not always been able to utilize this assistance. For example, Congress has appropriated \$89 million over 5 years (1998-2002) for a program to interdict drug shipments on the rivers of Colombia and Peru. The program is designed to develop counterdrug forces dedicated to operations on Colombian and Peruvian rivers and includes provisions for training, boats, and floating maintenance facilities and support bases. However, according to U.S. embassy officials in Peru, the Peruvian police (the lead agency for counterdrug enforcement) does not have maintenance capabilities or adequately trained staff to manage its own or U.S.-provided boats designed for river operations. Embassy officials told us that 8 of 16 boats the police purchased with its own funds in 1998 quickly became inoperable because the boats were accidentally beached when water levels dropped, and Peruvian police lacked the knowledge and/or parts to repair them.

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A February 1999 DOD memorandum on support to the Peruvian police stated that the police lacked the will and skills to maintain the boats. Peruvian police officials told us they do not have the budget resources to assume responsibility for spare parts and maintenance by January 2000, as required by the program agreement between the United States and Peru. Further, Drug Enforcement Administration officials told us that the Peruvian police force does not traditionally dedicate officers to specific tasks or missions and concluded that the objectives of the program may not be met. DOD officials told us that they are working with the Peruvian police to improve the situation.

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## Restrictions on Assistance

Human rights concerns also limit DOD's counterdrug assistance to foreign governments. U.S. law prohibits U.S. counterdrug assistance to personnel or units in foreign countries that have credible evidence against them of gross human rights violations.<sup>18</sup> We previously reported that U.S. officials had raised concerns about human rights problems with Colombian and Peruvian military and police units and that efforts were underway to overcome the problems.<sup>19</sup> According to State Department officials, these concerns have since increased. U.S. embassy personnel in Colombia told us that it would be difficult to provide support for counterdrug efforts to the Colombian military unless its units pass State Department screening for human rights abuses. However, only three of six army brigades operating in drug-trafficking areas passed the screening.<sup>20</sup>

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## Limitations on Intelligence Sharing

Concerns over evidence of corruption within foreign government counternarcotics units have caused the United States to limit the amount of intelligence information it will share with other governments. Consequently, although DOD may develop information on suspected drug-trafficking targets, it cannot always provide the information to the host nation. Intelligence obtained by the United States is a crucial element in counterdrug operations in Colombia, Mexico, and Peru. Some cooperation

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<sup>18</sup>22 U.S.C. 2304 (a) (2)

<sup>19</sup>*Drug War: Observations on Counternarcotics Aid to Colombia* (GAO/NSIAD-91-296, Sept. 30, 1991) and *Drug War: Counternarcotics Programs in Colombia and Peru* (GAO/T/NSIAD-92-9, Feb. 20, 1992).

<sup>20</sup>*Drug Control: Narcotics Threat From Colombia Continues to Grow* (GAO/NSIAD-99-136, June 22, 1999).

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is occurring. For example, in 1999 the United States signed an agreement with Mexico to increase intelligence sharing on law enforcement activities. Joint Interagency Task Force West officials told us that there have been some improvements in the way they share information with Mexico on the eastern Pacific area. Mexican counterdrug forces now receive more timely data on the presence and movement of vessels suspected of carrying illicit drugs.

In Peru, U.S. officials collect intelligence, analyze it, and pass it on to the Peruvian military. However, U.S. officials there told us they are not sufficiently staffed to carry out this task and have therefore been unable to build a sufficient base of intelligence information needed for effective operations. In Colombia, where DOD can share information on insurgent activity if it is directly related to an approved counterdrug operation, U.S. embassy officials sometimes have difficulty distinguishing insurgents from drug traffickers.

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## Conclusions

Due to reductions in budgets, force structure, and the lower priority accorded to the counterdrug mission, the assets DOD provides to the interagency counterdrug effort have declined. After a decade of effort, DOD has not developed counterdrug performance measures. Without such measures, DOD cannot clearly assess the effectiveness of its strategy, operations, and the assets it contributes to the national drug control effort.

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## Recommendation

In order for DOD to analyze and report on the relative effectiveness of its counterdrug detection and monitoring efforts on a consistent basis, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct that DOD's Office for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support coordinate with the joint interagency task forces and the Office of National Drug Control Policy to develop a set of performance measures for assessing DOD's contributions to U.S. counterdrug operations.

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## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

DOD provided written comments on a draft of this report. DOD partially concurred with the report, and agreed that the Department needs to develop measures of effectiveness for its counterdrug operations. DOD has taken some initial steps to improve its ability to measure its performance that we discuss in our report. However, DOD has not yet developed specific measures of effectiveness. Our recommendation is intended to encourage

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DOD to take further steps to develop a set of performance measures as part of its counterdrug strategies. For example, one performance measure might be to determine how often DOD detects known cocaine shipments and the percentage of detected shipments successfully handed off to law enforcement organizations. Analyzing trends in such measures could help DOD better evaluate the effectiveness of its contributions to the national drug control effort.

DOD stated that it has taken aggressive action to meet its detection and monitoring responsibilities but that it has no law enforcement role in the U.S. counterdrug effort. DOD stated that its mission is to support the efforts of law enforcement agencies and that it should not be evaluated based on the success or failure of these agencies' arrests or drug seizures. DOD noted that it has consistently applied available assets to detect and monitor illegal drug shipments. However, DOD pointed out that the number of available assets for counterdrug operations was affected by significant reductions in force structure, including the 44-percent decline in naval vessels from 1989 through 1999. Further, DOD stated that the introduction of the Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar system and the efforts of other U.S. agencies have partially offset the decline in available assets.

Our report clearly defines DOD's counterdrug support role and does not attempt to evaluate DOD's contributions based on the level of arrests or drug seizures. Our analysis focuses on the unique detection, monitoring, and intelligence assets DOD contributes to the law enforcement community. The report accurately describes the decline in the level of assets DOD has made available to the U.S. counterdrug effort, the reasons for the decline, the capabilities of the Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar, and the involvement of other agencies. While DOD states that it has consistently applied available resources in areas where drugs are produced and shipped, our report clearly demonstrates that gaps in detection, monitoring, and intelligence coverage exist in these areas. For example, as we note in the report, DOD was unable to sustain operations in two high threat areas, the Eastern Pacific and the transshipment area between Peru and Colombia, due to a lack of resources devoted to the counterdrug mission.

DOD also stated that our discussion of the lack of intelligence assets in cocaine-producing areas is not supported by empirical evidence. Further, DOD questioned whether the intelligence community would agree that there is a need for additional airborne intelligence assets in cocaine-producing areas and Peru, specifically. Our discussion of DOD intelligence

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support in the region is based on documents from DOD, Department of State, and other agencies. We corroborated the information with a wide range of officials from the U.S. Mission in Peru and the U.S. Southern Command. Further, we note that in congressional testimony the Commander of the U.S. Southern Command stated that significant deficiencies in the availability of intelligence assets impede the command's ability to react to the drug threat. Therefore, we believe the report is accurate and we have made no changes.

The comments provided by DOD are reprinted in appendix IV. DOD officials also provided technical comments, which we have incorporated in the report as appropriate.

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We are sending copies of this report to the Honorable William S. Cohen, the Secretary of Defense, and to interested congressional committees. Copies will also be made available to others upon request.

If you or your staff have any questions concerning this report, please call me at (202) 512-4128. Other GAO contacts and staff acknowledgments are listed in appendix V.

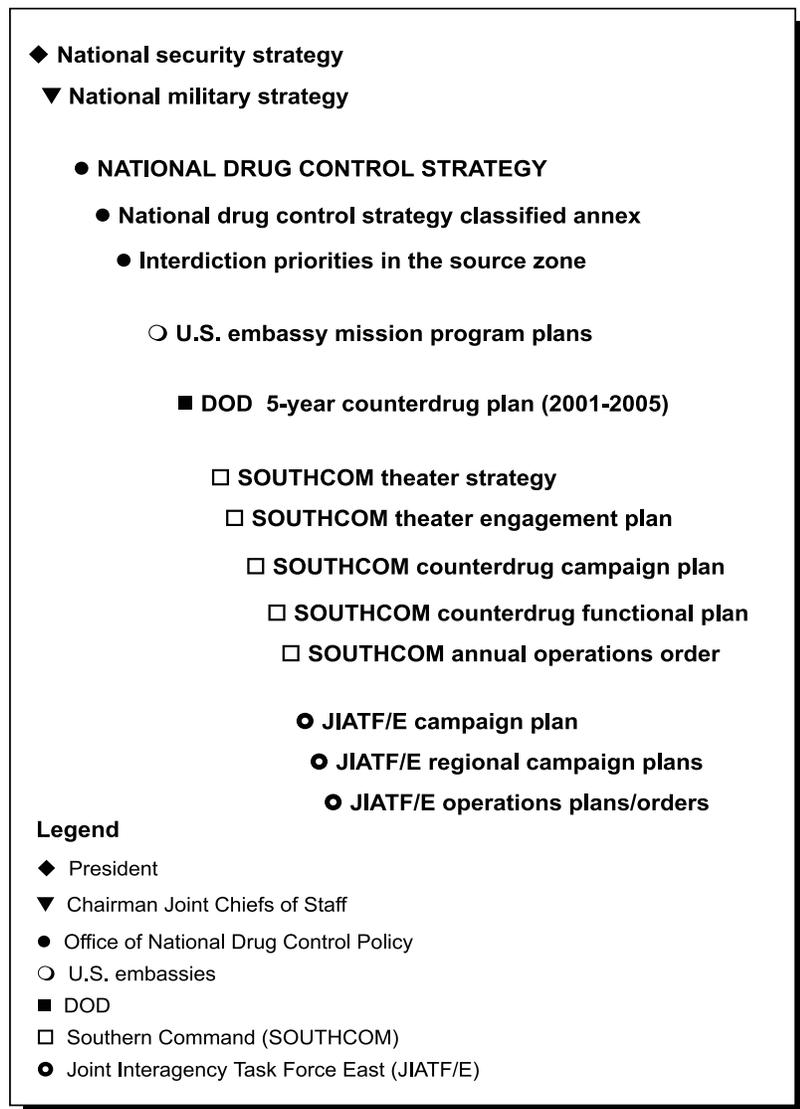
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jess T. Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jess T. Ford  
Associate Director,  
International Relations and Trade Issues

# Framework of Strategies Directs Department of Defense's Counterdrug Efforts

A framework of national; U.S. embassy; Department of Defense (DOD); and command-level strategic, operational, and tactical plans and strategies exist to guide DOD's counterdrug activities. Figure 6 provides a schematic of the hierarchy of these strategies and plans.

**Figure 6: Major DOD and Interagency Counterdrug Strategies and Plans**



Source: Office of the President, DOD, Office of National Drug Control Policy, and Joint Interagency Task Force East.

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## National Strategies

The national security strategy presents the core national security objectives of the United States and includes counterdrug activities as one of a wide range of initiatives. The national military strategy provides direction to the military in its efforts to implement the national security strategy. The strategy treats trafficking in illicit drugs as one of several transnational dangers that threaten U.S. national interests. The 1999 National Drug Control Strategy and its classified annex identify 5 strategic goals and 31 objectives as part of a comprehensive effort to reduce drug use (demand), lower drug availability (supply), and reduce the adverse consequences of drug use.<sup>1</sup> The five goals are to

- educate and enable America's youth to reject illegal drugs, as well as alcohol and tobacco;
- increase the safety of America's citizens by substantially reducing drug-related crime and violence;
- reduce the health and social costs to the public of illegal drug use;
- shield America's air, land, and sea frontiers from the drug threat; and
- break foreign and domestic sources of drug supply.

The majority of DOD's counterdrug activities focus on the last two goals. The strategy's annex presents strategic concepts, specific agency tasks, desired conditions, and impact targets for these two goals. Each of the specific agency tasks is assigned to multiple agencies and describes in broad terms what is to be done to reach the goal's desired condition. For example, under the fourth goal, one of the tasks is to

"Support expanding and enhancing dedicated, vetted, foreign drug law enforcement units in key source and transit countries. Facilitate sharing of intelligence and law enforcement information, and the conduct of cooperative investigations and law enforcement operations."

This task is assigned to six U.S. government organizations, including the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Customs Service, the Coast Guard, and the Departments of Defense and State. The specific actions that each agency must take to accomplish the

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<sup>1</sup>A National Security Strategy for a New Century (Washington, D.C.: The White House, Oct. 1998); National Military Strategy of the United States of America, Shape, Respond, Prepare Now: A Military Strategy for a New Era (Washington, D.C.: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1997); and The National Drug Control Strategy (Washington, D.C.: Office of National Drug Control Strategy, Feb. 1999). All of these strategies are broad in scope and do not provide any specifics of how their objectives are to be achieved.

tasks are not articulated in the strategy. Instead, each agency, on its own and in consultation with other agencies, must design and implement activities that will contribute to the accomplishment of the task and the desired objective.

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### **Embassy Counterdrug Plans**

To implement the national strategies at the host-nation level, U.S. embassies, located in countries where drug trafficking is a problem, include counterdrug-related sections in their program plans. These counterdrug sections identify the needs of host-nation military and civilian counterdrug organizations and are the basis for the counterdrug assistance DOD provides to host nations.

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### **Department of Defense Counterdrug Plan**

DOD has developed a 5-year counterdrug plan, based on the goals of the National Drug Control Strategy. The plan broadly describes the military personnel, detection and monitoring assets, intelligence support, communication systems, and training DOD provides to domestic law enforcement agencies and foreign counterdrug military and police forces. According to the plan, DOD will ensure that sufficient forces and resources are allocated to the counterdrug mission to support domestic and foreign counterdrug agencies in achieving "high-impact results." However, DOD is legally prohibited from actively participating in the apprehension or arrest of drug traffickers or the seizure of their assets. Moreover, DOD's plan states that personnel will not accompany participating nation forces on field operations.

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### **Southern Command Strategies**

Southern Command counterdrug strategies include the Southern Command Commander in Chief's theater strategy and theater engagement plan. The theater strategy presents Southern Command's vision, mission, goals, and strategic concepts necessary for developing engagement and counterdrug plans for its geographic area of responsibility. The theater engagement plan identifies all military activities involving other nations and details the command's concept for achieving national and theater engagement objectives. The plan is organized around three goals. The plan's second goal directs the command to develop an effective capability and will to respond to theater challenges and support counterdrug operations. This goal is supported by a number of counterdrug-related aims, the most prominent being to "assist in reducing illicit source zone activities and flow of illegal drugs through the transit zone." This aim is, in

turn, supported by three objectives that directly support the last two goals of the National Drug Control Strategy. The three objectives are to provide effective, cooperative support to U.S. and participating nations' efforts to

- interdict shipments of illicit drugs,
- reduce the supply of illicit drugs, and
- disrupt and dismantle drug-trafficking organizations.

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### **Southern Command Counterdrug Campaign Plan**

Southern Command's counterdrug campaign plan is a 10-year plan designed to support interagency efforts that diminish the economic viability of the illicit drug trade through the disruption of growth, production, and movement of illicit drugs, especially the shipment of cocaine into, within, and out of major production areas of the Andean Ridge region of South America. The plan is intended to better focus counterdrug resources and coordinate the command's efforts with other U.S. counterdrug agencies and participating nations. To that end, the plan defines the drug threat, the objectives to counter the threat, and the resources necessary to achieve the plan's objectives. In addition to the campaign plan, the command is developing a functional plan and an annual operations order. The functional plan, to be completed in January 2000, will describe the tasks that Southern Command's subordinate commands, such as U.S. Army South and Joint Interagency Task Force East, will implement to achieve the campaign plan's goals and objectives. The operations order will identify the time and location of operations and the forces that will execute the operations.

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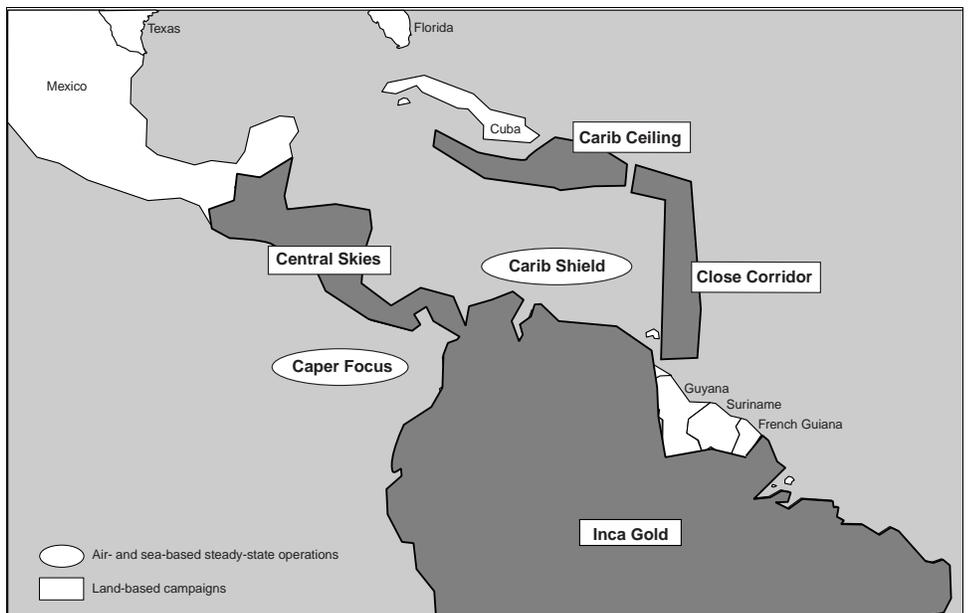
### **Joint Interagency Task Force Level Strategies and Plans**

Joint Interagency Task Force East's regional counterdrug campaign plan defines the task force's mission and objectives for supporting the Southern Command's counterdrug campaign plan. The task force is executing its counterdrug campaign plan through a number of regional, land-based counterdrug campaigns and air- and sea-based, "steady-state" counterdrug operations such as Central Skies and Caper Focus. Each campaign is comprised of a number of sequenced operations designed to achieve the goals of the campaign. For example, the Central Skies' campaign goal is to develop a "seamless regional counterdrug architecture in Central America." Joint Interagency Task Force East is attempting to achieve this goal by conducting operations that, among other things, enhance intelligence and information exchange between the United States and countries in the region; establish command, control, communication, computer, and intelligence systems between U.S. embassy country teams and host-nation

**Appendix I  
Framework of Strategies Directs Department  
of Defense's Counterdrug Efforts**

law enforcement organizations; support U.S. embassy counterdrug plans; provide regional planning assistance; and enhance host-nation counterdrug forces' capabilities. Each operation is implemented through individual plans and orders. The operational plans and orders move beyond broad statements of policy, mission, and objectives and provide details such as date, location, assets, entities involved, and counterdrug targets. Figure 7 illustrates the geographic areas where the campaigns and "steady state" operations are being implemented.

**Figure 7: Location of DOD-supported Regional Counterdrug Campaigns and Steady-state Operations**



Source: Joint Interagency Task Force East.

# Key DOD Counterdrug Intelligence, Detection, and Monitoring Assets

Through its standing counterdrug order, DOD has committed seven Navy P-3 tracker aircraft for maritime patrols, two E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System surveillance aircraft, four E-2 Airborne Early Warning aircraft, four F-15/16 interceptor aircraft, several naval combatant ships, and three radar picket ships to the counterdrug mission. Table 3 provides a description of the key assets DOD uses.

**Table 3: Major DOD Airborne and Maritime Assets Used for Counterdrug Operations**

<b>Asset</b>	<b>Capability</b>
E-2 Hawkeye aircraft	-Fixed-wing airborne early warning aircraft with air and maritime radar detection, search and surveillance capabilities. -Maximum endurance of 6 hours.
E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control Systems aircraft	-Airborne early warning system with command and control capabilities. -Air and maritime radar surveillance, detection, and tracking of suspect targets. -Data link to ground sites, naval vessels, and aircraft. -Endurance of over 9 hours, which can be extended with aerial refueling.
P-3 Counterdrug Upgrade Orion aircraft	-Fixed-wing surveillance aircraft with maritime surface radar search, electronic surveillance, and communications. -Maximum endurance of over 11 hours.
F-15 Eagle aircraft	-Single engine air-to-air search and tracking radar with identification of friend or foe capability. -Operated by U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard as an interceptor aircraft for counternarcotics purposes.
F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft	-Single engine air-to-air or air-to-ground fighter -Equipped with air-to-air search and track radar with identification of friend or foe capability. -Operated by U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard as an interceptor aircraft for counternarcotics purposes.
S-3 Viking	-Fixed-wing, twin-turboprop antisubmarine warfare aircraft used in a maritime patrol aircraft role. -Operated by the U.S. Navy and has surface radar search, electronic surveillance, and communications capabilities.
SH-60B Seahawk	-Twin-engine helicopter used for antisubmarine warfare, search and rescue, drug interdiction, antiship warfare, cargo lift, and special operations. -Operated by the navy as an airborne tracking platform based aboard cruisers, destroyers, and frigates.

**Appendix II  
Key DOD Counterdrug Intelligence,  
Detection, and Monitoring Assets**

SH2F	-Ship-based, medium, and antisurface warfare helicopter.
Air Reconnaissance Low	-U.S. Army multisensor, fixed-wing surveillance aircraft. -Collects image and signals intelligence
Picket ships (cruisers, destroyers, and frigates)	-Used as radar ships for air and maritime search and surveillance to support detection, monitoring, and tracking. -Capable of supporting a helicopter. -When law enforcement detachment is embarked, ships can support maritime intercept and apprehension.
Modified Tactical-Auxiliary General Ocean Surveillance ships	-Equipped with air search radar capability and deployed in lieu of navy combatants. -Capable of data linking with other platforms and have extensive communications equipment.
Patrol craft	-Special operations surface vessel equipped with surface search radar and communications equipment. -Used for detection and monitoring and interdiction when law enforcement detachment is embarked.

Source: DOD.

DOD also operates two Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar sites in the United States for aircraft detection and various radar sites throughout South and Central America and the Caribbean.<sup>11</sup>

A third Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar site, located in Puerto Rico, is expected to be operational in February 2000. Table 4 provides a description of the radar assets, figure 8 is a map of the coverage provided by the Relocatable Over-the-Horizon Radar system, figure 9 is a map of DOD's other radar systems, and figure 10 contains pictures of DOD's assets.

<sup>11</sup>The systems, located in Texas and Virginia, provide radar coverage in the Caribbean.

**Appendix II**  
**Key DOD Counterdrug Intelligence,**  
**Detection, and Monitoring Assets**

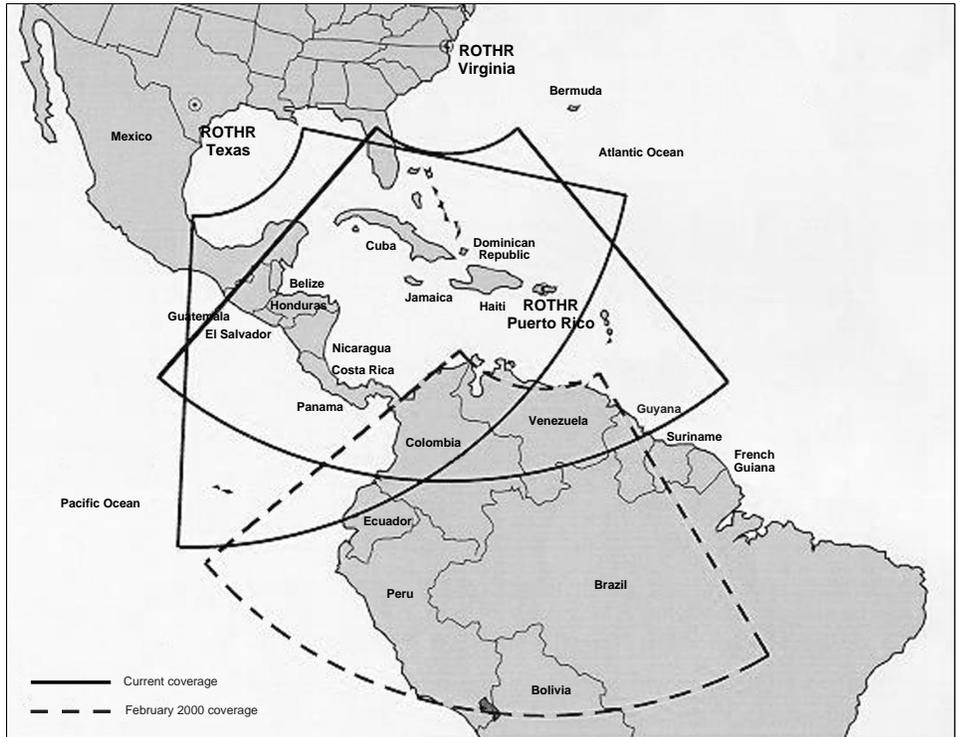
**Table 4: DOD Radar Assets Used for Counterdrug Operations**

<b>Radar</b>	<b>Capability</b>
Relocatable Over-the-Horizon Radar	-Provides wide-area detection and surveillance of air targets, with real reporting of targets of interest. -Lacks capacity to provide data on precise location of track or to engage in intercept operations.
Ground Mobile Radar	-Provides primary or augments existing radar coverage and is capable of long-range searches up to 95,000 feet.
Tethered Aerostat Radar System	-Static, tethered balloons that carry radar sets to an altitude of 10,000-15,000 feet. -Covers the major drug-smuggling routes along the U.S. southern border into the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.
Counterdrug Surveillance and Control System	-A series of linked U.S. or host-nation-owned radar sites. -Provides air surveillance information indirectly to the North American Aerospace Defense Command, and directly to the U.S. Southern Command, Joint Interagency Task Force East, and host nations.

Source: DOD.

**Appendix II**  
**Key DOD Counterdrug Intelligence,**  
**Detection, and Monitoring Assets**

**Figure 8: Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar Coverage**



Legend: ROTHR = Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar Coverage

Source: DOD.

**Appendix II**  
**Key DOD Counterdrug Intelligence,**  
**Detection, and Monitoring Assets**

**Figure 9: DOD's Radar Network Coverage on the U.S. Southern Border and in the Caribbean and Central America and South America**



Source: DOD.

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**Appendix II  
Key DOD Counterdrug Intelligence,  
Detection, and Monitoring Assets**

**Figure 10: DOD Counterdrug Assets**



E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System



E-2 Hawkeye



F-15



P-3



Air Reconnaissance Low

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**Appendix II**  
**Key DOD Counterdrug Intelligence,**  
**Detection, and Monitoring Assets**

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Tactical Auxiliary General Ocean Surveillance



Tethered Aerostat



Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar  
(Receiver site antennas)



Ground Mobile Radar

Source: DOD.

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# Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

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At the request of the Chairman of the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control and the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, Committee on Government Reform, we examined (1) DOD's plan for supporting U.S. counterdrug efforts and how DOD measures its effectiveness, (2) changes in the level of DOD support for counterdrug activities from fiscal year 1992 through fiscal year 1999 and the reasons for the changes, and (3) obstacles DOD faces in providing counterdrug assistance to foreign governments.

Our work focused on the U.S. Southern Command's counterdrug intelligence, detection, and monitoring operations because of the Command's central role in the DOD's counterdrug activities and the importance and cost of these operations. We used fiscal year 1992 through 1999 DOD counterdrug flight hour and ship day data because earlier data was not available.

To address whether DOD has a plan for supporting U.S. international counterdrug efforts, we examined the national security, military, and drug control strategies, as well as plans and strategies developed by DOD's Office for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support, U.S. Southern Command, and joint interagency task forces. In addition, we reviewed military planning guidance and counterdrug-related planning studies published by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D.C.; the Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; and the National Defense University, Washington, D.C. We interviewed officials responsible for the development and implementation of the strategies and plans at the Office of National Drug Control Policy and DOD, Washington, D.C.; the U.S. Southern Command, Miami, Florida; the Joint Interagency Task Force East, Key West, Florida; the Joint Interagency Task Force West, Alameda, California; and the U.S. embassy, Lima, Peru.

To determine whether DOD has a system for measuring the effectiveness of its counterdrug activities, we examined related documents prepared by DOD, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, U.S. Southern Command, and Joint Interagency Task Forces East and South. We also examined the operation of and data generated by the Consolidated Counterdrug Data Base used by DOD to compare the relative performance of its detection and monitoring assets. In addition, we interviewed officials from DOD's Office for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support and Office of National Drug Control Policy, Washington, D.C.; U.S. Southern Command, Miami, Florida; Joint Interagency Task Force East, Key West, Florida; Joint Interagency

Task Force South, Howard Air Force Base, Panama; and Joint Interagency Task Force West, Alameda, California.

To determine the changes in DOD's counterdrug support levels and the challenges DOD faces in providing counterdrug assistance to foreign governments, we analyzed DOD counterdrug budgets and interviewed officials from agencies involved in counterdrug activities in Washington, D.C.; Key West, Miami, and Tampa, Florida; Chesapeake and Norfolk, Virginia; Alameda, California; Lima and Iquitos, Peru; and Panama. In Washington, D.C., we interviewed officials and reviewed planning, budget, implementation, and related documents and reports concerning counterdrug activities at the Offices of National Drug Control Policy, the U.S. Interdiction Coordinator, and the Departments of State and Defense. At the Florida locations, we interviewed officials at Southern Command, Joint Interagency Task Force East, and the Special Operations Command and reviewed plans and other documents related to counterdrug activities. In Chesapeake, Virginia, we interviewed officials at the Fleet Surveillance Support Command and reviewed documents related to the Relocatable Over-The-Horizon Radar's role in counterdrug surveillance. In Norfolk, we interviewed officials at the Atlantic Command to obtain information on the resources the command provides to support DOD's counterdrug mission. In Alameda, we interviewed officials at Joint Interagency Task Force West and reviewed plans and other documents related to its role in counterdrugs. In Lima, we interviewed the U.S. Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission and officials from the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Military Advisory and Assistance Group. We also interviewed officials from the Peruvian Air Force, the National Police, and the Coast Guard. In Iquitos, we visited the Ground Mobile Radar site and the Joint Peruvian Riverine Training Center. In Panama, we interviewed the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission and Drug Enforcement Administration officials. We were also briefed on counterdrug operations at Howard Air Force Base and Joint Interagency Task Force South and reviewed plans and other documents related to their counterdrug operations.

We conducted our review from September 1998 through September 1999 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

# Comments From the Department of Defense



OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COORDINATOR  
FOR DRUG ENFORCEMENT POLICY AND SUPPORT

1510 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20301-1510

22 NOV 1999

Mr. Jess T. Ford  
Associate Director, International Relations and Trade Issues  
National Security and International Affairs Division  
U.S. General Accounting Office  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Ford:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to General Accounting Office (GAO) draft report, "Drug Control: DoD's Contributions to Reduce the Supply of Illegal Drugs Have Declined," dated October 22, 1999 (GAO Code 711370/OSD Case 1912).

The Department is concerned that the title leads the reader to form a conclusion prior to reading the report. The title inhibits an unbiased reading of the body of the report as it suggests DoD's contributions have declined when in reality, only the quantity of assets has declined. The title should be modified to ensure an objective review (i.e. "DOD's Role in Reducing the Supply of Illegal Drugs").

DoD takes aggressive action to meet its responsibility as the lead federal agency for Detection and Monitoring (D&M), but this role is only a supporting function. DoD has no law enforcement role in this mission area, and accordingly, all measurable "end games," such as seizures, are conducted by other agencies. Thus, it is inappropriate to consider seizures as a reflection of DoD's efforts. I would note, however, that seizures have remained consistent over the measured period.

As part of the larger interagency process charged with stemming the flow of drugs to our borders, the Department has consistently applied available resources in the source, transit and arrival zones. However, it must be noted that DoD has significantly reduced its force structure from 1992 to 1999. This reduction affected the number of assets available to conduct counterdrug and other missions globally. To illustrate this point, one must consider that in 1992, we were approaching a 600-ship Navy, whereas the Navy now has 316 ships in its inventory. Reductions of this magnitude as well as others affecting the Armed Forces must be part of any discussion concerning assets. This reduction has been offset by the contribution of vessels of the U.S. Coast Guard and our partner nations. Additionally, the introduction of systems such as the Relocatable Over The Horizon Radar (ROTHR) has made counterdrug D&M operations more efficient, partially offsetting the decline in available counterdrug resources.

The Department is also concerned with a perceived lack of empirical analysis accompanying several assertions within the report. As an example, a comment from a representative of the Peru Country Team stated a lack of reconnaissance aircraft dedicated to Peruvian Source Zone hampered intelligence efforts. The report does not characterize the intelligence community's assessment of the threat within Peru or the existence of a consensus within the intelligence community requiring further airborne reconnaissance assets in the region.



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**Appendix IV**  
**Comments From the Department of Defense**

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Nonetheless, the Department partially concurs with the report. DoD agrees its measures of effectiveness need to be developed further to adequately assess its contribution to the counterdrug D&M effort. To this end, DoD is participating with Joint Interagency Task Force East and Joint Interagency Task Force West in the development of their respective measures of effectiveness. Additionally, DoD developed and funds the interagency Consolidated Counterdrug Data Base (CCDB) which will be used to evaluate the performance of platforms in conducting the Department's D&M mission.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to review the draft GAO report. Detailed comments on the report's recommendations and technical comments from DoD and U.S. Southern Command are enclosed.

Sincerely,



Ana Maria Salazar  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for  
Drug Enforcement Policy and Support

Enclosures:  
As stated

**GAO DRAFT REPORT DATED OCTOBER 22, 1999**  
**(GAO CODE 711370) OSD CASE 1912**

**“DRUG CONTROL: DOD’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO**  
**REDUCE THE SUPPLY OF ILLEGAL DRUGS**  
**HAVE DECLINED”**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS**  
**TO THE GAO RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct that DoD’s Office of Drug Enforcement Policy and Support coordinate with the joint interagency task forces and the Office of National Drug Control Policy to develop performance goals and measures for assessing DoD’s contributions to U.S. counter-drug operations. (p.28/Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: DoD developed and funds the interagency Consolidated Counterdrug Data Base (CCDB) for multiple purposes, one of which is to evaluate the performance of its platforms in conducting its legislatively directed Detection and Monitoring mission (D&M). The Department is in the process of expanding the program to better utilize the data. Evaluation will expand beyond straight interpretation of D&M results to include evaluating the balance between Department D&M resources/efforts and Federal law enforcement agencies’s ability to execute successful end-game operations.

Additionally, the National Guard’s Counterdrug Task Force has developed and implemented a new reporting system, the Counterdrug Management Information System (CMIS). CMIS is operational in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia. The National Guard Coordinator in each state/territory is responsible for the input of mission data, which is then compiled at the national level to assist providing a measure of effectiveness.

Finally, DoD has utilized a measure of effectiveness prescribed by ONDCP: the quantity of drugs seized compared to the estimated quantity of drugs shipped with planned destinations in the United States. That percentage has remained relatively constant between 1992 and 1999.

Now on p. 26.

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# GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

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## GAO Contact

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## Acknowledgments

In addition to Mr. Suda, Joseph C. Brown, David M. Bruno, and Janice V. Morrison made key contributions to this report.

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